

From the very beginning of our time, we have been committed to serving each other. Benjamin Franklin started a volunteer fire department in a library and took care of those in the community, as have others.

From the beginning, through war, through disaster and through famine, we have seen the greatest step forward to serve our country. Who could forget the service of the Greatest Generation who came forward in so many ways as others went to war and we saw our own population step up to fulfill the roles in our community and to each other?

What do these volunteers do each day of the year? They teach others to read. They care for others who are ill. They work on the forefront for disaster. Right now, in my own State of New Hampshire, which has once again been hit by flood waters, we have volunteers who are out there serving our community. They serve to take care of babies and young mothers. They serve to take care of alcoholics and drug addicts and the most vulnerable in our communities, and they continue their service right through hospice and in senior settings. So we have to thank our volunteers and also recognize what motivates them and to encourage them. That is what this resolution does, to speak to them and to urge them to continue their service.

While we have had the greatest numbers at all in the past year, 61.2 million volunteers, we have also had a slight drop. We have to make sure it is possible for volunteers to continue their full-time lives of service in their own jobs and then also in their communities.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 293, which supports the goals and ideals highlighted through National Volunteer Week.

I would like to thank my colleague from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) for introducing this legislation and bringing it to the floor here today.

As we have heard, National Volunteer Week has been celebrated since 1974, when President Nixon signed an executive order establishing this annual celebration of volunteerism.

As we now celebrate another National Volunteer Week, we are reminded that community service takes place through efforts both large and small throughout our great country. This year's Volunteer Week theme is Inspire by Example, and countless individuals of all backgrounds and ages inspire others every day through their efforts to address the common concerns of our neighborhoods, communities, Nation, and world. And I know personally that it was the example of my parents, Babs and Dutch Platts, volunteering in our community as a Sunday school teacher, a Little League coach,

running the school candy sales; their example of volunteerism for me and my four siblings helped to inspire my interest in public service and pursuit of this very position I now hold.

Our country has seen the inspiring example of our citizens' willingness to serve others in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and rebuilding efforts along the gulf coast, and in response to countless other tragedies, large and small, that touch lives every day.

Community service isn't just about responding to disaster. It is also about lifting a hand to help a neighbor, teaching a child to read, restoring a neglected park, and numerous other acts of good will that reaffirm our common humanity. As cochair of the National Service Caucus here in the House with Representatives CHRIS SHAYS, DORIS MATSUI and DAVID PRICE, I am particularly interested in seeing the spirit of volunteerism celebrated and extended to as many Americans as possible.

As this resolution says, more than a quarter of this country's population volunteered in some capacity from September of 2005 to September of 2006 at an estimated value or benefit to our country of \$280 billion. I certainly hope these numbers continue to grow.

I also want to express my thanks to the thousands of organizations and their leaders across the country that capture the spirit of our volunteers and bring that spirit to bear in a concentrated way to relieve suffering, provide opportunities to the needy, to clean up our communities, and bring hope to millions. These organizations and the public and private partners that support them provide needed infrastructure to support the energy of our community service providers.

As this resolution states, National Volunteer Week will continue to raise awareness of the role that volunteers play in local, national and international communities, and their commitment to improving lives, strengthening communities and fostering civic engagement.

Again, I thank my colleague, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and urge my colleagues to support National Volunteer Week and to support House Resolution 293.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky, JOHN YARMUTH.

Mr. YARMUTH. I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, in a week when our hearts are heavy with the weight of yesterday's tragedy at Virginia Tech and the anniversary of the shooting at Columbine High School, it is important that we also remember America's tremendous capacity for selfless acts of goodness.

I refer to a spirit that sets aside superficial desires in favor of the needs of our fellow human beings, a spirit that shows our Nation at its best, the spirit honored during this National Volunteer Week.

Last year, as has been said, more than a quarter of Americans dedicated their time to bettering their communities, inspiring by example and improving lives.

I am fortunate to represent a community in which passionate leadership and dedicated citizens have enacted community service projects on every scale throughout Louisville. Just during our recent recess, I think a picture has been painted of what people are willing to give to others. On one morning I joined more than 3,000 volunteers of all ages as we embarked on a project to clean up across the communities in furthering the Operation Brightside movement. In visiting schools, we saw parents and grandparents volunteering their time to help kids. In hospital after hospital we saw people of all ages helping our sick. And also in one of the most moving experiences during my recess, two first grade classes at Coleridge-Taylor Elementary had decided to help the troops in Iraq. They went out and collected 200 pounds of candy to send overseas. These were sixth graders who saw the need to give of their time and energy to help others. It was truly an inspirational moment.

The great thing about volunteering is it is a way that you demonstrate your citizenship. We talk a lot about patriotism and citizenship in this body, but nothing demonstrates citizenship more than your willingness to spend your dear time to help others.

I hope this week does not stand alone in honoring our generous citizens and organizations. And I urge every citizen to join them in discovering the rewards that volunteering has to offer.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 293.

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Connecticut, co-chair of the National Service Caucus (Mr. SHAYS).

Mr. SHAYS. I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 293, supporting the goals and ideals of National Volunteer Week.

This week, we celebrate the millions of volunteers from around the country who give their time and energy to their communities.

National Volunteer Week's theme, "Inspire by Example," says it all. Volunteers set an example of selfless service in giving in support of our country's most vulnerable residents, the homeless, hungry, elderly, at-risk youth, and disabled. Their work not only supports their communities, but encourages others to do the same.

More than 61 million people volunteered between September 2005 and September 2006. The estimated value of volunteer time given in 2005 is \$280 billion.

This underscores the value of national service. Our Federal national service programs give Americans of all ages the opportunity to serve in areas of need around the country, recruiting